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THE
TRUTH
AND
EXCELLENCY
OF

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of the
Christian Religion
DEMONSTRATED
AGAINST

2. At the
Jews,
Mahometans,
and
Heathens.

PUBLISHED
At the desire of some Learned men,
and for the satisfaction of all Rational
Persons in ENGLAND.

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THE
TRUTH
AND
EXCELLENCE
OF



At the City of New York, this 1st day of January, 1901.

(1)

Brevis Demonstratio;

Or, a brief


DEMONSTRATION

OF THE

TRUTH

OF

Christian Religion.

I.  Or the demonstration of the fundamentals of Christian Religion, it is necessary to inquire, which is that Religion reveal'd by God, wherein the most perfect way of worshipping God is contain'd? Here now all the Religions that are or ever have been in the world, are to be taken and examined by the Rule of right reason; and out of them all that is to be acknowledged genuine and truly divine, which prescribes that manner of serving God, which is most perfect and most agreeable to the Principles of sound Reason. But least any should think it too hard a task, to examine all the sorts of Religions in the world, or be affrighted with the vast difficulty of Inquiry, among so many differences of Opinions concerning God

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and

and his Worship, we will abridge this toil. For the so diverse kinds of Religion may be reduc'd to four Heads or Ranks: For whatever Religion either was or is, is either Heathenish or Jewish, or Christian or Mahometan. Now then out of all these we will demonstrate, that the Christian Religion is the truest, and that by two Arguments.

II. The first is taken from the highest perfection of this Religion, which argues most strongly that it was not devised by the wit of man, but that it proceeded from God out of Heaven. For either all Religion is to be rejected, and God and his Providence wholly to be denied, (which we shall prove cannot be done without folly, yea madness) or it must needs be, that this Religion (which is so perfect in all respects, that nothing is wanting to it, which is required to the best way of worshipping God) is true, and divinely deliver'd and reveal'd. For whether you consider it comparitively or absolutely, you shall find it to be most perfect. For it not only very far excels in perfection, all the Religions, which any where are or have been in the world, but also it is impossible, that another more perfect according to right reason, could be imagin'd or invented.

III. Both which that they may appear, as well its Nature as Adjuncts, or some of its most divine Effects, are briefly to be look'd into. But we ought not to judge of its nature from elsewhere, then from those Books which are confess'd by all the Professors of this Religion, although differing among themselves, to contain Christian Religion. For as a Judgement ought to be made of the Religion of the Gentiles out of the Books of the Heathen; of the Mahometan, out of the Books of the Alcaron; of the Jewish Religion out of the Books of Moses;

Moses; so it is fit to judge of Christian Religion out of those Books, which all Christians believe and confess, to have been written by the first Authors of this Religion. Which Books shall thereby be prov'd to be of divine and undeniable Authority, when it is prov'd that in them is contain'd a description of a most perfect and most divine Religion.

IV. The nature of Christian Religion is to be considered either in respect of Parts, or in respect of Qualities; its parts are promises and precepts. What can be more sublime and perfect, then the promises of Christian Religion? In this life a few things truly belonging to the body, and necessary for sustenance are promised, that the Christian Religion might be by so much the more perfect: But in the mean time there is promised that which exceeds all earthly Goods, even the highest and paternal favour of God, offering pardon to them that repent of all their past sins, and that they might not sin for time to come, the gift of the Holy Spirit (a necessary help to the performance of the duties of Piety) and also a peculiar Guard of Angels. But after Death there is promised a return to Life, blessed Immortality, a heavenly Kingdome in conjunction with a most pleasant Aspect of the supreme Deity, and the fellowship of blessed Spirits. The Precepts also are suitable to so sublime Promises. There is nothing wanting in them to the highest sanctity; forasmuch as Christian Piety consists not in bodily washing, but in true renovation of mind, in subduing of the flesh and affections, in an unconquerable patience under evils, in a constant meekness, in a perfect abstinence from hurting others, in a chearfull readiness to help them, in a continual celebration of the Name of God, and assiduous exercise of

servent Prayer, in a diligent regulating of all actions, words and thoughts, in a full faith and trust in God, in a most ardent desire of celestial Immortality and serious meditation of divine things, in a true contempt of the World, its Riches, Honours and Pleasures, and if there be any thing else, which Reason dictates to be joyned with Vertue.

V. Neither may any man say that the precepts of Vertue would have been more perfect, if we had been enjoyned perpetual abstinence from Marriage, as also from Meat and Drink, or if there had been no remission of sins, no reward proposed to them that do well, that so men might be drawn by the love of Vertue alone, not hope of reward. For who sees not that such things can have no place in men, as are above their strength and nature? It is therefore great imprudence to require of them so great perfection. In which matter the Heathen Philosophers extreamly doted, who dream'd of I know not what empty Notions of Vertue, as if conversing in *Plato's Commonwealth*, they had had a purpose to form the life of celestial Persons, not the manners of mortal and frail men. The perfection of precepts is to be accommodated to the model of the strength and nature of those to whom they are prescribed. So sound Reason, so Prudence enjoynes. For who would praise him, that should impose on Child of three years old, a Burden that can scarce be born by a strong man of full age. In this very thing therefore the high perfection and wisdom of Christian Religion is manifest, that it delivers most divine precepts, and prescribes a Doctrine of great piety, as greater cannot agree to mortal men; yet nevertheless it doth not onely not exceed humane strength, but also is not hard to be performed, as we shall shew by and by.

VI. We

VI. We shall now speak of the qualities of Christian Religion, which appertain to the perfection of its nature, they are these :

1. That it is universal, not peculiar to one Nation only, but common to all men of all Kindreds, Nations, Ages, Conditions and Sexes.

2. That it is spiritual both in its precepts and promises, in those requiring internal purity of mind, not external cleansing of the body ; and in these propounding not carnal but spiritual benefits.

3. That it is easie, because it invites men to piety by a most ample and inestimable reward ; for the greatness of the reward lessens and takes away all the difficulty of the labour. Again, because it many wayes assists humane imbecillity, in the course of vertue, by the holy Spirit, inasmuch as thereby mens minds are confirmed in the Truth, cleared in doubts, encouraged in dangers, and filled with a sure hope of eternal Life. Thirdly, because it prescribes nothing but what is exactly consonant to reason : but those things are more easily done, the equity whereof the Understanding sees, and the reason of which we perceive ; then those things, which why they are to be done, we know not. That is the part of ingenuous men, or (as I may so say) of Sons, who are not ignorant of what the Father doth ; This of Servants, who are seriously treated, and to whom is given no reason of designs, but are led by the meer Authority of the Commander. That makes that what is commanded be done willingly and cheerfully ; this unwillingly and by constraint.

VII. Let us now come to the Adjuncts or Effects of Christian Religion, and they are discerned in the altogether

ther divine and wonderfull propagation of it , in which these things following are to be noted.

1. That many thousands of men of all sorts , forsaking their Countrey-Religion, to which they were accustomed from their youth , embraced it in great numbers.

2. That very suddenly , that is, in the space of thirty years, or thereabouts, as appears by Histories , it spread it self far and near , not onely in *Judea* , and all *Asia*, yea through the whole *Roman* Empire, but beyond it also , it founded in the ears of *Parthians* and *Indians*.

3. That it extirpated Paganisme, so that the Religion of Christ increasing , that came to nothing , neither is there any memory of it now extant , save in Books onely.

4. That being not supported by Armes and worldly power it encreased so much , and for near three hundred years , before the Emperour *Constantine* induced it , it was promoted by the means onely of private men.

5. That by mean, contemptible , simple men and Idiots it was first delivered and divulged.

6. That all the wise and mighty of this world were against it ; yet notwithstanding , neither by the craft of the *Jewes* , nor power of the *Romane* *Cesars* , (whereof ten are reckoned chief Persecutors of this Religion) nor yet of other Heathens could it be suppressed.

7. That innumerable companies of its Professors by no, though never so cruel pains and torments, no not by any the most ignominious death, suffered themselves to be affrighted from it.

8. That it has nothing in it gratefull to the flesh , it looseth nor the reins to licentiousness , it opens not the way to pleasures nor honours, it allures not men by the com-

commodities of this life, but rather deprives them of them, least any should think that the so prosperous success of its propagation were to be ascribed to a Doctrine, flattering and pleasing the lusts of men.

9. That it hath continued now a thousand six hundred sixty years and upward, without any interruption.

10. That at this day it is so largely spread, that it has filled almost the whole world; for it possesseth not onely all *Europe*, but also *Macedonia*, *Thracia*, and the Isles of the *Aegean* Sea are filled with it, and both under the *Turk* and *Tartar* live Christians innumerable; in *Affrica*, also in the Kingdome of the *Abissines*, *Congo* and *Dangali*; also in *Peruvia* and *New Spain* in *Goa*, and the Islands unto which the *Dutch* and *Spaniards* have Commerce, touching which Geographers may be consulted.

Lastly, They are not wanting in *America*, as testifieth *Acosta*, and others, that have written of the *American* Affairs. Certainly all these things are an Argument that God takes care of this Religion, and that by his providence it was upheld and propagated.

VIII. These things being considered, it is easie to perceive that other Religions are not to be compar'd with this. For as to the *Jewish*, Christian Religion indeed gives testimony to it, that it also had God for its Authour; but (1) its great imperfection shews it was given but for a time onely; for whether you consider the promises, they according to the letter did contain onely temporal and worldly things, in which surely the chiefest Good could not consist; and no man can deny but God might give better then they; or whether you consider the precepts they for the most part were in prescribing Ceremonies,* or whether you consider the latitude and extent, it was restrained to one Nation onely, neither did

did God take course that it should be preached to other Nations ; yea, its nature was such, that it could not concern other Nations, which appears even from the sacrifices , which ought not to be offered but in *Palestine* , and by the Tribe of *Levi* : whence it is, that even at this day the *Jewes* being banished from their Native Countrey abstain from sacrificing. So neither could the Laws concerning First-fruits, Tithes, and Festival Assemblies, *Exod.* 34. 26. *Deut.* 26. 23. also 12. 5, 6. 16. 16. be observed by all Nations. Either therefore other Nations ought never to worship God, and consequently God had in vain given to the greatest part of men the use of reason and will, which are the instruments of Religion, which to say is absurd : as of necessity another Religion was to be delivered by God, which should concern all the men in the world. For although it was so for a time, that the other Nations besides the *Jewes* , were destitute of Divine Revelation , and that by the certain counsel of God, namely , because of the voluntary defection of those Nations from God to idolatry and impiety , yet it is absurd to hold that they were so rejected of God for ever.

2. That it was to be abrogated, the propheties which are extant in their prophetick Books do shew : among which that place in *Jeremy*, 31. 31. is eminent , where God promises to make a New Covenant with his people, different from that of *Moses*. Also *Dan.* 9. 24. where the Coming of the *Messiah* , the desolation of the City *Jerusalem*, the destruction of the Temple , and the abolition of Sacrifices is foretold. It was granted to *Aaron's* posterity alone to offer Sacrifice , and that in the Countrey of their Fathers : but in *Psal.* 110. there is promised a Priest, not according to the order of *Aaron*, but according to the order of *Melchisedeck*, that is, such an one

as should have neither Predecessour nor Successour in the Priesthood. It is foretold in *Isaiah* 19. 19. and 66. 18. to the end, *Mal.* 1. 11. that the *Gentiles* also should be worshippers of God, and offer Sacrifices to him, and be his Priests. The *Jews* in the Law were commanded to keep Festivals; but now *Isa.* 1. 11. and so forward, God saith, That he disdained as their Sacrifices, so also their appointed Times and Feast-dayes, and that he was weary to bear them; and *Isa.* 66. 23. it is foretold, That if it should come to pass, that the Worship of God should be perpetual, and not performed on certain dayes onely, but every day; to wit, from Sabbath to Sabbath, and from New Moon to New Moon.

3. That the *Jewish* Religion is indeed abrogated, and that those propheties are fulfilled, the thing it self shews. For that place in which God had fixed the Seat of his publick Worship is taken away, and quite overthrown, together with the Temple, its Ornaments and Sacred Vessels: so that the Temple could never be restored, although *Julian* attempted it, as *Ammianus Marcellinus* a Heathen Writer testifieth, *lib.* 23. But he saith that he was hindered by fearefull balls of fire, which did spring out of the foundations, and consumed men. The Priesthoods and Rites of Sacrifices instituted by God, belonging to Divine Worship, and the distinction of Tribes was taken away, so that a great part of the *Mosaical* Laws lie now neglected by the *Jews*; and can by no means be kept. The very people of the *Jews* so much heretofore beloved of God for their Ancestours, now for more then a thousand six hundred years dispersed and banished out of their Country, are become the laughing-stock, the drags and talk of all other people & Nations, which is against the promises of the Covenant, in which earthly happiness was proposed

sed to the Jews, *Deut.* 28. God indeed threatneth them even with banishment and all kinds of adversity, if they should transgress: but to them that should from their hearts repent; and return to obedience, he promisseth that he will shew mercy to them, and bring them back from the utmost corners of the world to their Countrey again, *Deut.* 30. *Nehem.* 1. 8, 9. But *Isa.* 54. 7, &c. God saith that he will be angry with his people but a little while, but now after so great an interval of time there is as yet no hope of a better condition, and return into their Countrey: from that time there has not been any Prophet among them, there is none sent by God to comfort them, which yet was done heretofore in the *Babylonish* Captivity, which though it was most heavy, yet it lasted onely seventy years.

I X. Neither ought it to move any one that it was promised that that Old Covenant should be perpetual and everlasting. For the word *everlasting* or *perpetual* is not alwayes taken for an infinite duration, but for a very long time, which is usual as well in common speech as in Holy Writ. So it is said that the Land of *Canaan* should be an *everlasting* possession to the seed of *Abraham*, *Gen.* 17. 8. out of which nevertheless they were ejected: in like manner that the sacrifice should be perpetual, *Lev.* 6. 20. which notwithstanding is now ceased among the Jews. It is said *Exod.* 21. 6. that the Servant should serve his Master for ever. The divine Prophet *David* saith, that he would praise God for ever, that is, all the dayes of his life, *Psal.* 52. 9. It is said that *Samuel* should abide in the Temple for ever, *1 Sam.* 1. 22. The hills also are said to be everlasting, *Gen.* 49. 26. The earth to abide for ever, *Eccles.* 1. 4. By that manner of speech therefore are distinguished the Laws that were to endure as long

long as the Jewish Religion should last, from those which were constituted for a certain time, such were some of those that were prescribed to the Jews in the Wilderness, *Exod. 35. 26, 27*. Neither is it to be thought that God did so bind himself by those words that he should not change any thing, as to intimate, that he would not have any thing changed by men : For God made Laws not to himself, but to men. He has alwayes power of abrogating Laws that have been once made, especially those that are not founded in intrinsical honesty, but such as are of a middle and indifferent nature, and depend upon the meer will of the Commander, (such are all Ceremonial Laws) but his Creatures cannot do so.

X. Hitherto we have shew'd out of the Mosaical and and Prophetick Books, how imperfect the Jewish Religion is. But you will acknowledge the same to be more imperfect, and confels it to be no wayes agreeable to reason, if you look into the Talmudick Books (which are stuffed with vain Tradition and old Wives Fables) and upon the various superstitions of the moderate Jews. You shall find their God weeping for ruin'd *Jerusalem*, and reading daily in the Law, besides other most absurd things concerning *Behemoth* and *Leviathan*.

XI. If the Jewish Religion which had God for its Author, gives place to the Christian, much more the Mahometan and Heathenish. The Mahometan indeed is later then the Christian, and it cannot deny that Christ the Author of it, was a divine man. Now that the Mahometan Religion is false, appears chiefly from these reasons :

1. Because it is contrary to the Christian Religion, which we have shew'd to be true and given by God, and

hath taken away very many of its Laws ; for whatsoever is contrary to Truth is false.

2. Because instead of Christs precepts it hath substituted baser Laws ; and it is far more imperfect then the Christian, as well in its promises as precepts. For it promises nothing but carnal things, and hath recalled Circumcision, which together with other Ceremonies had been abrogated by Christ. But it is no wayes credible, that God after so perfect a Religion as the Christian is, would propose to the World a more imperfect one, seeing it doth not become the most wise God to descend from high to low things, but rather go on from imperfection to perfection.

3. Because it has been established and propagated by Armes and carnal force, and is even still preserved by the same.

4. Because in matters of Faith it forbids inquiry after Truth, and takes away all, yea a modest liberty of disputing, and also keeps the people from reading the Books which it accounts sacred, whereby it makes it self forthwith suspected, as if it were not good wares, which is forbid to be view'd and searched.

5. Because *Mahomet* the Author of it was a most profane man ; for he was a long time a Ravisher, and alwayes given to Women : Hence it is that in his *Alcoran*, many obscene and foul things are read. But that God by an unclean man would institute any holy Religion, is by no means agreeable to reason.

XII. The Heathen Religion renvins, which truly doth not deserve to be brought into comparison with the Christian, so manifest is its falsity and turpitude even from these reasons:

1. Because it had no promises nor precepts from
God :

God : of which two things true Religion doth consist.

2. Because it believed not one most High God, but divided the Government of the World amongst many gods, not subordinate one to another.

3. Because it affirmed concerning its gods, things most filthy and abhorrent from all honesty, describing their Lusts, Quarrels, Thefts, and I know not what wickednesses.

4. Because it was not ashamed to worship things inanimate, and Brutes far inferiour in dignity to men.

5. Because it was burthened with Rites that were partly ridiculous and foolish, partly obscene and impure, partly horrid and cruel : All which things every one doth easily perceive are contrary to sound reason. But in Christian Religion you shall find no such thing, which also by its coming in wholly blotted out and extinguished that Heathenish Religion, as we have before hinted. If any one would shew us beside this old one, some other Paganish Religion in the World at this day, its falsity also would forthwith appear, if it were compared with the Christian. For *rectum est index sui & obliqui*, Truth shews both it self and falshood.

XIII. Thus we have demonstrated that Christian Religion considered both absolutely and in it self, and also compared with all other Religions is most perfect. Now if you demand how it came to pass, that God did not presently in the first Ages of the World institute it among men, there are more then one reason at hand.

1. Because men were at the beginning not capable of so great perfection. For mankind had after a sort its Infancy, Childhood, and Youth, which needed as it were the first Elements of Religion, that so it might by little and little be prepar'd for higher things, and brought to per-

perfection. Neither in Arts did men forthwith come, or were as it were at one leap brought to the highest perfection; but humane industry did from rude beginnings, as it were by steps, ascend and aspire to it. It became therefore a prudent Law-giver to accomodate himself to the capacity of those that were to be instructed, and not so much to consider his own wisdom, as the dulness of those that were to be taught. So are Parents and Masters wont to proceed prudently in the instructing of their Children and Scholars. Therefore it became also the most wise God in delivering precepts of Religion, to proceed by little and little from the more imperfect ones to those that were more perfect.

2. Because by this deferring of the perfect Religion unto more adult times, God would excite in the minds of men a greater alacrity to entertain it. For long fasting is the best Sauce for meat most sweet in it self, and after long Storms and Tempests the smiling Calms is more gratefull. God would therefore that men should first be thoroughly sensible of their most miserable condition without hope of immortality, taste all the evils of mortality, that afterward when the promise of eternal felicity had shined forth from Heaven, all men every where might by so much the more eagerly flie together to so joyfull a message, and should embrace it with both their Arms. Neither indeed do Mortals now behave themselves becoming enough so great a good: What think you would have been done, if presently from the beginning of the World the way to Heaven had lain open to mankind; and so men might think that the right of the heavenly Inheritance was as it were a thing natural to them, and offer'd as their due?

The Truth of the Christian Religion being demonstrated

ted from its great perfection, we shall now bring another Argument which even alone would be sufficient to prove the matter in hand : yea , which most evidently demonstrates not onely the Truth of Christian Religion, but also both the Existence and Providence of God against impious Atheists. So that all that hath hitherto been spoken, may hence take very much strength and weight. And it is drawn from History and Chronology ; for either no History is true , and credit is to be denied to all things done, whether written or spoken , and the same are to be accounted meer Fables and Fictions ; or if this be absurd, all must confess, that that which is delivered in Historical Monuments touching Christian Religion revealed by God is true; for there can be no History shewn, in which are to be found, I will not say more, but as many Arguments, Testimonies, and Marks of Truth, which that it may appear, there are two things in all to be proved by us.

1. That sometimes there was in the world such an one as Christ Jesus, who is said to be the Authour of this Religion.

2. That this Jesus was a Divine Person , and the true Messiah or Saviour of the world, sent by God to institute this Religion. When both these are proved , there will remain no doubt, not onely of Christian Religion , that it is most true and to be received by all , but also of God, that he is, and that he takes care of Mankind.

X V. The former can be proved without much ado, yea, it scarce needs proof. For who can doubt that Christ was upon the earth , when he seeth the Religion, which has its name from him, to be extant even at this very day ? for this is all one as if one should doubt whether *Mahomet* the Author of the *Mahometan* Religion, which he knows to be extant , was ever in being ? or
when

when he hears *Aristotle's* Doctrine taught in the Schools; whether *Aristotle* ever was? or when he reads the Histories of what was done by the *Romans*, *Greeks*, and *Macedonians* should doubt whether there ever was either those Nations, or the Writers of those things? But if any be either so stupid or ignorant of those things that are done in the world, he shall be convinced by the Testimony of the whole world. For,

1. Thousands of Christians are witnesses, which we have shewed above, to have filled almost all the corners of the Earth.

2. The very bitterest enemies of Christian Religion are witnesses. For both the *Mahometans* and all the *Jews* do testify it, among those in the *Alcoran*, among these in the *Talmudick* Books many things are read concerning Christ. Lastly, the most famous Writers of the Heathens have made mention of him, among others *Tacitus*, *Suetonius*, *Pliny junior*, *Alias Lampridius*, *Alias Spartianus*, *Flavius Vopiscus*, *Eutropius*, *Ammianus Marcellinus*; the words of some of whom shall be produced afterward. From the same doth appear both the place and time, when and where he lived, by whom he was put to death, to wit, in the Reign of *Tiberius*, and by the Governour *Pontius Pilate*, also that he rose up in *Judea*: for *Tacitus* calls *Judea* the source of this evil, meaning Christian Religion; some of the ancient Christians in their time, that is, well nigh two Ages after the Birth of Christ, testify, That the Acts of *Pilate* were extant, and kept in the *Roman Archives*, in which all things done in *Judea* by and with Christ, were written to *Tiberius* the Emperour, & the *Roman Senate* by *Pilate*, then President there. And that these do not testify this falsely, appears from hence, That writing Apologies for the Christians to the *Roman Cæ-*

sars, they so confidently appealed to those Acts and publick Records. These are the words of *Tertullian* in his *Apologetick*: *Tiberius* therefore, in whose time the Christian Name came into the world, after he understood out of Syria, Palestine, that wh. ch there had manifested the Truth of his (Christ) Divinity, proposed it to the Senate with the Prerogative of his Suffrage; the Senate, because they did not approve, rejected it; *Cæsar* persisted in his opinion, threatening danger to the Accusers of Christians. Consult your Commentaries, there ye shall find, that *Nero* did first rage with the Imperial sword against this Sect, then chiefly springing up at Rome. It is most remarkable, that in the same *Apologetick* he cites out of the same Acts of *Pilate*, a Testimony concerning the darkness that miraculously happened about the Passion of Christ at Mid-day. In the same moment (saith he) the Day was darkned, even when the Sun was at the highest: verily they also that knew not it had relation to Christ, thought it was an Eclipse: and yet ye have this disaster of the world recorded in your Archives, *Justin Martyr* also in his *Apology* to *Antoninus Pius* writeth in these words; That these things were so done, ye may know out of the Acts that were written under *Pilate*. And again, And who hath done these things ye may know out of those Records that were written under *Pilate*. With what face I pray could they so grossly lye before the Emperors? How easily might they be detected and convicted of falsehood? How dear would this lye have cost them; if either there were no such Acts, or that those things they affirmed of Christ were not extant in them? The same Authors, that they might shew that Christ was born in the time of the general Tax under *Augustus*, as it is set down in the Gospel according to *Luke*, appealed to the Tax-rolls, and referred the Gentiles to them, in which

the description of that Tax was as yet in that time extant, and there was read the Name of Jesus born of Mary in Bethlehem. For thus saith *Tertullian lib. 6.* against *Marcion*. Lastly, concerning the Tax [or Enrolling] of Augustus, which the Roman Archives keep as a most faithfull witness of our Lords Nativity: And afterward. But it is also manifest that the Tax [or Enrolling] under Augustus, was made at this time in Judea by Sentius Saturninus, in which they might find out his Parentage. And in the Book against the Jews: For he was of the Countrey of Bethlehem, and of the House of David, as by the Romans, Mary, of whom is born Christ, was reckoned in the Tax-roll. Chrysostome later then *Tertullian* affirms, That as yet in his time those Rolls and the Name of Jesus in them were extant. There were also many of the Heathens who wrote against Christian Religion, such were *Celsus*, *Porphyrius*, *Julian*: but they, by reason of the clear evidence of the thing, did never deny but that there was such an one as Christ. But in a matter most evident, what needs much proof, especially seeing that from the later particular which we have undertaken to prove, the former also will be manifest, and necessarily follow? therefore omitting this, we will now proceed with Gods assistance to the proof of that.

XVI. As to the later then, namely, that Jesus was a Divine Person, and sent from God, that will without doubt be sufficiently proved, when we shall have proved that this Jesus was famous for stupendious miracles, led a most holy life, and underwent most direfull torments, and an ignominious death upon the Cross for the cause of his Religion, and afterward the third day was raised by God from the dead, and taken up into Heaven, and from thence he shed forth upon the Disciples plentifully of the

the holy Spirit, and sent them to teach all Nations his Doctrine.

XVII. Now this is proved by three reasons. The first is, That there are undoubted witnesses of this matter, and such whose Testimony cannot but be true; but those witnesses are,

1. As to his death and miracles, the very mortal enemies of Christian Religion, whose Testimony surely in this case is free from all suspicion of fraud. And they are first the Jews, from whose both or all Confession and Talmudick Writings every one may know it; Secondly, The Mahometans in the Alcaron; Thirdly, the Heathens, of whom are *Celsus* and *Julian*, who although they detracted much from Christ in the Writings which they set out against Christians, yet they did not deny his cruel death and miracles; which appears from their refutation by *Origen* and *Cyril*.

2. The witnesses of all those things, which we have related concerning Christ, were his Disciples, who lived in that Age, and especially his twelve Apostles, to whom was added also a thirteenth, who of a most fierce enemy became a Disciple of Christ, being called from Heaven to give witness to him. Neither matters it, that his Disciples onely bear witness of his Resurrection and Exaltation; for such things as these no one but his Disciples could witness. For who could see Christ raised again, and reigning in Heaven, and not become his Disciple? It sufficeth that the Testimony of those Disciples is beyond all exception.

XVIII. But that their Testimony was such is proved,

1. Because they confirmed their Testimony by most Divine Miracles, in healing Diseases incurable by hu-

man Art, in raising the Dead, and casting out Devils; but that they did these things will by and by appear.

2. Because it is certain that those witnesses could neither be deceived, nor would deceive. That they could not be deceived is manifest, 1. Because they were not onely Ear but Eye-witnesses. 2. Because they witnessed a thing; not once onely seen, but approved by frequent and often repeated Experiments for forty dayes together, and not looked upon with the eyes onely, but handled also with the hands. 3. Because there was not onely one witness, but besides five hundred together, that at one and the same time saw Christ after he was risen, and unto whom *Paul* appealeth, *1 Cor. 15. 6.* (which lyars are not wont to do) there were thirteen chief witnesses in a special manner chosen and appointed to testify this very thing. So many persons could not possibly be deceived in things exposed to their senses. It remains to be proved that they would not deceive, which is hence manifest:

1. Because they were honest men, and of holy and unblameable life : so that they were never accused, much less convicted of any real crime, no not by their most malicious enemies, among whom they conversed.

2. Because this Profession cost them the greatest sufferings and perils, neither did they gain by this way either riches, or honour, or glory; but on the contrary incurred the bitterest hatred of the whole world, and drew upon themselves an Heap and Pile of most grievous Afflictions, which by a bare deniall of this thing, they might have avoided. Well saith O.

— *Cam sint pramia falsi*

Nulla , ratam debet testis habere fidem :

When falshood reward has none,

That witness is a faithfull one.

How much more ought the credit of that witness to be held Authentick; when the Testimony has not onely no reward, but moreover draws along with it perils, scourgings, banishments, contumelies, imprisonments, and all manner of most terrible deaths? If they had been such perverse men, as that they would lye on set purpose, certainly they would not have feigned with so great damage to themselves a thing so odious and hatefull, and would rather curry favour with the Nobles and People of the Jews, whom they knew to hate Christ with a perfect hatred, then by a false and so odious an affirmation, to have provoked and stirred up their minds against them: for this is the manner of Impostors, and those that love lying, to contrive nothing sooner then that which they think will be most gratefull to their Hearers: and as Fishers are wont to bait their hooks with such things as they know the fishes like; so these also, that they may insinuate into the minds of men, love to tell those things which they know will please them, and accommodate their words to tickle their ears. But these despising pleasures, and contemning both the hatred and kindness of men, underwent both an infamous life and death for the profession of this thing; what place is here for suspicion of any the least untruth. Neither may you think that this Argument is infringed by the example of those, who even for the sake of a false Religion and Doctrine,

ctrine, bear oftentimes cruel torments, yea and stick not to spend their lives on it : For it is one thing to die for a false Doctrine, which thou believest to be true ; another thing to die for a false Doctrine, which thou knowest to be false, and feigned by thy self : Of the first there are very many examples, but of the later it is impossible that among men in their wits, and not extreemly mad, there should be any example at all. But the most divine Writing of the Apostles, and full of profound Wisdom, which we have in our hands, do more then enough vindicate them from the imputation of foolishness and madness.

X I X. A second reason, whereby the resurrection of Christ and his Divinity is proved, is this ; namely, That so many thousands of men in all Nations believed on him; not onely of the common sort, but also of the Learned, Wise men, and Philosophers. And they so believed, that they suffered not themselves to be deterr'd from this Faith by any Persecutions, yea, or cruel Death. And this is so much the more wonderfull, in that the obstacles to Religion were almost infinite. They were hindred, (1) By an inveterate love of the Religions of their Countrey, received by long Custome. Who knows not how zealous the Jews are, and were alwayes in their Religion ? and no man can doubt the same of the Heathens, that knows that *Socrates* was therefore condemn'd at *Athen*, because he seem'd to introduce a new Religion.

2. By the ignominious Death of Christ ; for how hard think you was it, to believe in one that was crucified, and to take him for Master and Lord, whom the Jews hang'd upon a Cross as a wicked and heinous Offender, tormented with all kinds of contumely and cruelty ?

Hence

Hence *Paul* the Apostle not without cause writeth, *1 Cor.* 1.23. that he preached Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness.

3. By the harshness of the precepts; for the Doctrine of Christ bade open war to all carnal Concupiscences, and confined men to a strait path.

4. They were hindered by the incredibility of the things promised: *We declare unto you* (saith the Apostle) *1 Cor.* 2.9. *things that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have come into the mind of man, which God hath prepared for them that love him.* But we do not easily believe things that we see not; as one said, Our hands are eyed; they believe nothing but what they see. Great happiness indeed is promised, but not till after death. In the mean time visible things that are present are to be forgone, for the hope of invisible that are future.

5. By the means of the persons, by whom the Doctrine of Christ was preached: For they were of the common sort of men, Unlearned, Fishers, Publicans. Moreover few, such as neither Splendour of birth had made illustrious, nor fortune conspicuous, nor multitude formidable, nor power venerable, nor wit admirable, nor favour of Nobles acceptable, nor any Art or Eloquence made fit to bend and allure the minds of Mortals. And nevertheless Synagogues, Schools, Academies, Cities, Towns, Kingdoms, and Empires, yielded to, and believed these simple men. What *Aristotle*? what *Plato*? what *Chrysippus*, or *Epicurus* has got so many Disciples, and persuaded so many men of their Doctrine? although they were most famous for wit and learning: How many thousands of thousands have the Apostles, those simple and unlearned Fishers, drawn into Christ? So that

that, it was truly foretold them by Christ, that they should become Fishers of men.

6. By the simple and blunt way of teaching. The Apostles used not artificial and elaborate speech, neither affected and composed to deceive, but vulgar and common. *Our preaching* (saith Paul, 1 Cor. 2.4.) *was not with persuasive words of mans wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.* They used not force to compel Dissenters, not fraud to deceive the unwary, not carnal threats to terrifie the obstinate. They used onely perswasion, and that simple and inartificial. But who would believe, that the armed World could by perswasion alone, be subdued by unarmed weak men, indued with no Authority or priviledge?

7. By the most grievous sufferings, that were to be born or expected daily by all & singular the Professors of Christ. There was never any sort of men, no Sect, that was vexed with so many and so great Calamities, as of the Christian Religion. All the Powers, Malice, Wits of all degrees, Emperours, Kings, and People, had conspired for their destruction. Divers kinds of cruelty, most exquisite manners of death were invented. The innocent Christians were not onely despoiled of all their Goods, not onely banished, and exposed to the hatred, injuries, and contumelies of all men, but were condemned to wild Beasts, to Mines, and Quarries. Some were Ston'd, some were cast into Rivers; one was Sawn asunder, another was Flea'd alive, another was Roasted in the fire, the whole Assembly sometimes with their Meeting-house was burnt together to ashes. Witnesses of these things are the ancient Histories written, not onely by Christian, but even by Heathen Authors. Tacitus thus describes Nero's cruelty against the Christians,

ans, *Annals* 15. 'Therefore to extinguish the rumour
 ' (to wit of firing the City by the command of *Nero*)
 ' *Nero* falsely accused and punished most grievously certain
 ' people, hated for their wickedness, which the com-
 ' mon sort called Christians. The Author of that Name
 ' was Christ, who in *Tyberius* his Reign, was put to
 ' death under *Pontius Pilate*, Procurator of *Judea*. And
 ' their dangerous superstition suppressed for the time,
 ' burst forth again; not onely through *Judea*, where it
 ' first began, but in the City also, whither all wicked
 ' and shamefull things run from all parts, and are solem-
 ' nized and esteemed. First they were apprehended
 ' which confessed that Religion; then by their detection,
 ' an infinite multitude were convicted, not so much for
 ' setting the Town on fire, as for the hate of all men
 ' against them. Such as were condemned, were scorned,
 ' and mocked, and covered in wild Beasts skins, and torn
 ' in pieces with Dogs, or fastned on the Cross, or burnt
 ' in fire; and when the day failed, they were burnt in
 ' the night to give light. *Nero* had made the prospect of
 ' his Gardens fit for that spectacle, and caused Shews to
 ' to be set forth in the Cirque, and himself either ap-
 ' paralled like a Waggoner, shuffled among the people,
 ' or ran the race with them. Whereupon pity was taken
 ' on those persons, though guilty and deserving exem-
 ' plary punishment, seeing they suffered not for any pub-
 ' lick good, bur to satisfie one mans cruelty onely.
Suetonius also in the life of *Nero* make mention of the
 sufferings which the Christians endured, when he saith,
The Christians, a sort of people addicted to a new and mis-
chievous superstition, were punished. So doth this Heathen
 judge of Christian Religion, therefore because it was
 joyned with contumely of the Heathen gods and their

worship. But that I may not here relate all the Testimonies of the Heathens touching Christians, one most clear Testimony of *Pliny junior* shall serve instead of all. He in *Epist. 97. ad Trajan. lib. 10.* of Epistles, consulting Trajan what was to be done with Christians, and how they were to be punished, expresseth (1) The torments they suffered, and the Christians constancy. *In the mean time with those that were converted before me, as being Christians I followed this method. I asked them if they were Christians: those that confessed I asked again and again, threatening punishment. I commanded those that were constant to be had away. For I doubted not whatsoever it was they confessed, but that pertinacy and inflexible obstinacy ought to be punished. As if indeed perseverance in a good cause were pertinacy. By and by he writeth that some of them were Roman Citizens; & afterward, by process of time, as it useth to be, the crime diffused it self. So Christian Religion increased by the very sufferings, and took growth and strength from the very persecutions. Furthermore relating how he had brought some to this, that while he led them an example they would call on the gods, and supplicate with Wine and Frankincense the Images of Caesar and of the Deities, besides would curse Christ; he adds, Those that are indeed Christians, are said to be such as cannot be compelled to any such thing. Behold a high commendation of true Christians! Secondly, he sets out the Religion and Worship of Christians: ' But they affirmed that the sum either of their fault or errour was this, That they were wont to meet together on a certain day before day-light, to sing among themselves by turns a Song to Christ, as to a God; and to bind themselves in covenant, not to any wickedness, but that they would not commit any theft, nor*

' nor robberies, nor adulteries, that they would not betray
 ' their Trust, nor being required deny that which was in-
 ' trusted, which being finished it was their manner to depart
 ' & come together again to take meat, but promiscuous &
 ' harmless. At length he saith, That having used torments to
 search out the Truth, *He found nothing but a wicked & ex-*
cessive superstition. But how wicked it was appears from his
 own relation. Thirdly, he tells how great a multitude of
 Christians there was : ' For it seems to me a matter wor-
 ' thy consultation, especially because of the number of
 ' the endangered : for many of every Age, of every De-
 ' gree of both Sexes are and will be brought into danger.
 ' For the contagion of this Superstition is diffused, not
 ' onely through Cities, but also Towns and Countreys,
 ' which it seems possible to stop and amend. Surely it is
 ' manifest enough, that the Temples which were now al-
 ' most desolate begin to be frequented, and the solemn
 ' worship that was long intermitted to be repeated, and
 ' the Sacrifices are every where sold, for which lately
 ' there was rarely found any buyers. Hence it appears
 from whence so great a hatred of Heathens against Chri-
 stians sprang, to wit, because they saw that utter destru-
 ction and ruine was seizing on their Idols and Paganish
 Worships by means of Christian Religion. But *Pliny*
 was greatly frustrated in this, that he hoped that Christi-
 an Religion could be stopped and extinguished by those
 punishments. For how vain all endeavours of Tyrants
 and Enemies were in suppressing the Gospel, and hindring
 its course, experience it self is witness.

XX. Seeing therefore the Christians endured so ma-
 ny and so great things, seeing they had so many obstacles,
 and yet firmly adhered to Christ : what other cause
 could there be thereof then the great and invincible pow-

er of Truth, which the Apostles confirmed both by the example of their unblameable piety and cruel death, and chiefly by miracles never before heard or seen. But if any one shall obstinately deny that miracles accompanied the Church of Christ in its beginning, he considers not that he asserts a far greater miracle then ever was, to wit, that so great a multitude of men, and almost the whole world should be converted without miracles. But there is no doubt but these Primitive Christians were diligent and industrious enough in examining those miracles, and searching out the Truth of Christian Religion; seeing therein not onely their eternal salvation, but also their present life and all their fortunes were concerned. Very wittily and truly saith *Pliny*, *Singuli decipere & decipi possunt, nemo omnes, neminem omnes fefellerunt*; Every one may deceive, and be deceived; no man hath deceived all men, nor have all men deceived any. This Argument therefore is of so great moment, that no man in his wits can gain-say it.

XXI. The third way of proving the Divinity of Christ is taken hence, That the History of the Resurrection and Glorification of Christ is contained in the sacred Books of the New Testament. But that those Books are of Divine Authority is proved,

1. Because they contain the most perfect way of worshipping God, and living piously: such as neither men nor Devil could devise; not men, as it appears from comparing the Precepts contained in this Book; not the Devil, because he being an enemy of all vertue, cannot be the Author of so holy a Doctrine.

2. Because there are extant in them many Predictions concerning things future, which we see afterward really fulfilled and proved true by the event. 1. Concerning the
de-

destruction of the City *Jerusalem*, and the subversion of the Temple, *Mat.* 24. *Luke* 19. 43, 44. 2. Concerning the Conversion of the Gentiles to Christ, *Mat.* 23. 23, &c. *Mat.* 8. 11. 3. Concerning the great and sudden propagation of Christian Religion, *Mat.* 13. 31, 32, 33. *John* 12. 32. 4. Concerning its perpetual Duration, *Luke* 1. 33. *Mat.* 28. 20. *John* 14. 16. 5. Concerning the most grievous persecutions of Christians, *Mat.* 10. 17, 21, 34. That I say nothing now of the Prediction of Christ concerning his own sufferings and Death, as also his Resurrection after three dayes, *Mat.* 16. 21. *Luke* 18. 31, 32, 33. which unless the event had confirmed, his Disciples would at no hand have believed in him. For by this so evidently false Prediction, he had betrayed himself to be an Impostor and Lyar.

3. Because they were written by the Apostles, or by the familiar Companions of the Apostles, whom we have shewed a little before to have been Divine Men, and such as neither could nor would lye.

XXII. This one thing therefore remains now to be proved, to wit; that the Books of the New Covenant were written by the Apostles, and those whose Names they bear. But to prove that, we need no other Argument then the Testimony and consent of the ancient Christians, which were nearer the times of the Apostles. All these whose writings we have, acknowledge these Books for the genuine writings of the Apostles and Evangelists. And it is certain they used the utmost diligence in searching out the Truth of this matter. See the Epistles of *Ignatius*, who flourished soon after the destruction of *Jerusalem*. See *Justin Martyr*, who lived about the hundred and fiftieth year of Christ. *Irenaeus* about the two hundred and thirty. *Clement Alexandrinus* about the year two hun-

hundred and six, *Tertullian* about the year two hundred and eight, who also mentions, That even the authentick writings of the Apostles were yet extant in some Churches in his time, *lib. de Prascrip. cont. Hæres.* See *Origen* about the year two hundred and thirty. *Eusebius* the Ecclesiastick Historian about the year three hundred, who from the best Antiquities extracted especially the Truth of these Books, differencing the genuine Apostolick writings from the spurious and counterfeit; and again, of the true and Canonical Books shewing which without any Controversie were alwayes in all Churches accounted for genuine; and of which there was in the beginning some doubt, but so, as afterward the matter being better tried the doubt ceased. Adde to this the great multitude of Ecclesiastical Doctors after the time of *Constantine* the Great, and among them chiefly *Jerome*, an exact Searcher of this matter. But neither have the Jews in times past, nor Pagans ever raised a Controversie with the Christians touching these Books, as to say they were feigned by the Christians, and falsely attributed to the Apostles: nay farther, *Cyril* testifies in the tenth Book he wrote against *Julian*, That that Heathen Emperour and Apostate, a most bitter Persecutor of Christians, doth openly confess it, That the writings of *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke*, *Peter*, *Paul* are the same that Christians read under those names. We see then that this so unanimous and uniform consent concerning these Books, had continued without interruption to this day, that is, for more then sixteen hundred years. Behold, into how various Sects Christians have for a long time been, and are now divided: how dispersed and different in Regions, Tongues, Wits, Opinions, and notwithstanding their so much disagreeing in many chief Points of Doctrine, they all agree in this, That they
con-

constantly and unanimously believe these writings to be Apostolical, and of divine Authority, why we should depart from so ancient and perpetual a consent, there is no reason. But without reason to doubt of or contradict a thing universally received is foolish. By what other reason I pray doth it appear at this day, that the works of *Livie*, *Tacitus*, *Curtius*, *Virgil*, are those which are ascribed to them, but by the consent of all the Learned, of which there is no cause to doubt; and if any one doubt he may deservedly be counted a fool. Neither yet was it ever enquired into the Books of those Authors with so great industry, as into the Truth of the New Testament, because that in the Books of the profane Authors men are little concerned; but in this Book they believe their eternal felicity is placed. Wherefore also it is to be reckoned, that we have sufficiently proved the Authority of the Sacred Scriptures, since we have proved they cannot be doubted of without folly.

If any desire more concerning this Subject, let him read *S. de Authoritate S. Scripturae*, *Hugo Grotius*, of the Truth of Christian Religion. *Episcopus Institut. Theolog. de Messia*, & *de libris Novi Testamenti*. But he that is not satisfied with these, let him read *Philip More* of the Truth of Christian Religion, *Raimundus Sebundus*, *Ludovicus Vives*, *Savienardus*, and many others, who have more then sufficiently polished this Subject, as well with Philosophical subtilty, as great Learning and Eloquence.

F I N I S.

(13)
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